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His claims to distinction must have been recognized in more seminaries of learning than he knew. His text-books have had, and still have, a largely extended use in colleges and academies. The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by the University of New York in 1858, and that of Doctor of Laws by Western Reserve College in 1870, by Trinity College in 1871, and by the University of Edinburgh in 1886. His was a not infrequent and an always welcome presence at Harvard College, where he is gratefully remembered as a Phi Beta Kappa orator and as a preacher in Appleton Chapel.

President Porter was in every respect a man of high tone, large-hearted, broad-minded, true, sincere, faithful, honorable, making himself not only respected but beloved, and most by those who knew him best. He was a firm Christian believer, with fixed opinions based on deliberate conviction, but with only the kindest regard for those who differed from him. He cannot but have endeared himself to his students by a gentleness which was never weak and a firmness which was never harsh or stern. His text-books are conservative in their philosophy, and especially valuable for the justice and candor with which he treats the various schools and types of speculation, even when most remote from his own. As a preacher he was always instructive and impressive; for his sermons were full of profound thought on subjects of infinite moment, and his style, while massive and with little ornament, was marked by purity of diction, clearness of meaning, and precision of statement. In his early ministry he must have been a popular preacher, in the better sense of the term; of late years he has commanded close attention and deep interest in proportion to the receptivity of his hearers, and their own nearness to his own elevated plane of mind, heart, and soul.

FOREIGN HONORARY MEMBERS.

JOHN COUCH ADAMS.

JOHN COUCH ADAMS was born at Lidcot, England, on June 5, 1819. His unusual mathematical abilities became evident early in his life, and obtained for him the highest honors at the University of Cambridge, where he graduated as Senior Wrangler in 1843. His election to college fellowships made it practicable for him to devote

himself to his favorite mathematical pursuits, and in 1858 he was made Professor of Mathematics at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. He held this position only for a year, as in 1859 he was appointed to a Cambridge Professorship, and accordingly returned to his former residence. In 1861 he succeeded Professor Challis as Director of the Cambridge Observatory, and continued in that office until his death, on January 21, 1892, after a protracted illness. In 1881, he was offered the position of Astronomer Royal, left vacant by Airy's retirement; but advancing years made him unwilling to accept a place requiring so much exertion from its occupant.

The life of Adams, thus outwardly uneventful, practically consisted of a series of mathematical researches. It may be said to have opened with one which had the quality, rare in such work, of attracting public attention by its dramatic character. Immediately after his graduation, he directed his thoughts to the subject, then ripe for consideration, of the unexplained irregularities in the movements of Uranus, and to the question whether the place of an unknown planet, capable of producing such perturbations, could be defined by calculation. In 1845 his solution of the problem was communicated to Challis and to Airy, the Directors of the Cambridge and Greenwich Observatories; but partly through accident, partly through the adoption of too mechanical methods in such search as was undertaken for the theoretical planet in England, the discovery of the actual planet Neptune was reserved for the continent of Europe, where Leverrier furnished the prediction verified by Galle. The similarity of the results independently attained by Adams and by Leverrier was such as to exclude, at least to the uninstructed mind, the possibility that either of the investigators could have erred in his method of inquiry; and the remarkable nature of their achievement won for them general admiration and applause. The theoretical planet which they had discovered by inference certainly differed in many important respects from the observed planet found by Galle. Whether the approximate coincidence of the apparent place among the stars occupied in 1846 by the theoretical and real objects was casual or not, this certainly formed a question to be considered only by men who felt themselves able to compete mathematically with Adams; and it has never been minutely considered by a sufficient number of such men to establish a decision upon the subject from which no appeal can be taken. But in the absence of a clear decision to the contrary, the scientific world continues to regard the predictions of Adams and Leverrier as a real mathematical discovery; while in any case there can be no doubt of the evidence of mental

power displayed in the researches from which these predictions resulted, or of their deserved prominence in the history of astronomy.

Among the various researches which were subsequently undertaken by Adams, that relating to the secular variation of the Moon's mean motion was perhaps the most interesting and important. This investigation reopened a question which had been regarded as finally settled by Laplace. Adams detected an omission in the work of his predecessor, which, when supplied, proved to disturb the agreement previously supposed to exist between theory and observation. A new physical cause was now required to explain the observed results, and this was found in the retardation of the rotation of the Earth due to the tides. In this case, a protracted discussion of the subject among the foremost mathematicians who concerned themselves with astronomical inquiries resulted in confirming the theory maintained by Adams. But the amount of the secular variation forming the original subject of discussion has not yet been definitely fixed by observation. At present it seems probable that the researches of Adams brought theory into better accordance with fact, instead of disturbing an existing agreement. If this view should prevail, tidal retardation must be regarded as compensated by terrestrial contraction, or by causes as yet unknown.

The orbit of the remarkable body of meteors to which is due the recurrence of brilliant displays of shooting stars about the middle of November, three times in each century, was another subject investigated by Adams with great success. In general, it may be said that in all the principal discussions of his time respecting recondite questions of theoretical astronomy he took a prominent part, and that no arguments were regarded with more respect than his by those capable of appreciating them.

Besides his academical honors, he received many tokens of distinction from learned societies, and his name was familiar, as it will long continue to be, wherever the mechanism of the solar system is discussed or studied.

GEORGE BIDDELL AIRY.

GEORGE BIDDELL AIRY was born at Alnwick, England, July 27, 1801. His university education was obtained at Cambridge, where his mathematical ability became conspicuous, and where he graduated as Senior Wrangler in 1823. In the following year he was elected a Fellow of Trinity College; in 1826 he was made a Professor, and in 1828 the Director of the Observatory. These early honors were